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C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 000408

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TAGS: IO PHUM UNGA IS WB
SUBJECT: LONDON - GOLDSTONE DEMARCHE DELIVERED

REF: A. REF A STATE 15722
1B. REF B 09 LONDON 2638

Classified By: Political Counselor Greg Berry for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) Summary: Poloff demarched FCO's Levant Team Leader Nishi Dholakia and MENA UN Issues Desk Officer Colin McDonald on February 22 using points provided ref A. Dholakia indicated that the UK's final position on the text was dependent on the outcome of an EU coordination meeting later that day and the willingness of the Palestinian delegation to make any EU required changes to the text. While the UK would "likely be forced to abstain" on the draft in its current form, Dholakia was cautiously optimistic that the end result would be something the UK would be able to support. Dholakia viewed the current draft as "relatively moderate" and while sharing USG concern over not wanting to do anything that might be counterproductive to getting the two parties to the negotiating table, argued that there was a need to "keep up the pressure" on Israeli PM Netanyahu. End summary.

EU Coordination Remains Priority

12. (C) Poloff demarched FCO's Levant Team Leader Nishi Dholakia and MENA UN Issues Desk Officer Colin McDonald on February 22 using points provided ref A. Similar to the FCO's position on the last demarche on this issue (ref B), Dholakia stressed that finding a common EU position remained a top priority. To that end, EU missions were planning a working-level coordination meeting later that afternoon to discuss the issue. London had instructed their mission in New York (UKUN) to approach the meeting with an "open mind." While he saw a few "issues" with the text, overall, Dholakia reasoned that in comparison to other Arab-supported texts circulated previously on similar issues that this particular text was relatively "moderate" and lacked the "usual level of inflammatory language." FCO shares USG concerns regarding the Swiss conference. With regard to the reference in PP2 to East Jerusalem as part of the Occupied Territory, Dholakia viewed this as simply a "statement of fact" and one that is in keeping with previous EU statements. While he didn't believe that the reference needed to be there, the UK certainly would not be leading an effort to have it removed from the text.

Keeping Up the Pressure

13. (C) In response to points raised reftel, Dholakia understood and shared USG concerns about not wanting to do anything that might harm the prospects for getting the two parties back into negotiations. While he agreed that additional resolutions on Goldstone weren't particularly constructive, Dholakia noted that this concern must also be balanced by a concern that Netanyahu "only acts when

pressured" -- when "too comfortable," he (Netanyahu) can be "quite unhelpful." Dholakia readily agreed on the capability of Israel's domestic accountability. However, the UK position has been and remains that Israel should undertake an independent inquiry into Operation Cast Lead. It is not simply a question of the individual incidents, but rather the "wider policy" that is in "need of more attention."

Finding an Agreeable Text

¶4. (C) Dholakia said that in the text's current form the UK would likely abstain -- at least that would be the recommendation put to Foreign Secretary Miliband, who would make the ultimate decision. However, if the EU could find a common position on a few changes, particularly in OP4 and OP5, and the Palestinian delegation was able to agree to the changes, than Dholakia's team would recommend that Miliband instruct UKUN to vote in favor of the text.

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